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**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please consider the claims as follows:

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1. (original) A method for encoding a user interface which comprises an information section and a display section, the method comprising:  
encoding a non-blank background for the information section; and  
skip encoding a blank background for the display section.
  2. (original) The method of claim 1, where encoding the information section includes quantizing a transformed image using a quantizer stepsize that is relatively low so as to substantially maximize a bit rate allocated to the information section.
  3. (original) The method of claim 2, where the user interface comprises an interactive program guide, where the information section comprises a program grid section, and where the display section comprises a multimedia section.
  4. (original) The method of claim 3, where the non-blank background comprises a striped background.
  5. (original) The method of claim 1, where the user interface is encoded at a server for display at a client terminal.
  6. (original) The method of claim 5, where the server is located at a headend of a cable TV distribution system.
  7. (Cancelled)
  8. (original) A method for encoding a user interface which comprises an information section and a display section, the method comprising:  
dividing the information section into macroblocks;  
forward transforming each macroblock to generate a transformed image;

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quantizing the transformed image to generate a quantized image; and  
encoding the quantized image to generate an encoded image of each  
macroblock,

where the information section includes background stripes, and  
where the macroblocks do not cross any border between two adjacent  
background stripes.

9. (original) A method for encoding a user interface which comprises an  
information section and a display section, the method comprising:

forward transforming a source image of the information section to generate a  
transformed image;

low-pass filtering the transformed image to generate a filtered image;  
quantizing the filtered image to generate a quantized image; and  
encoding the quantized image to generate an encoded image of the  
information section,

where the information section includes background stripes, and  
where the low-pass filtering reduces visual defects from encoding of the  
background stripes.

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